

**Montana WIC Program
eWIC Working Group Conference Call Notes
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Important Resource: Please visit Montana WIC's [eWIC Information for Retailers](http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/WIC/Retailers/eWICInformationForRetailers) webpage for information such as training memos, conference call notes, Approved Product List, and more.

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Introductions / Review Agenda

Status of eWIC pilot:

- About 25 stores certified for eWIC readiness in the pilot area, went live in 2 agencies June 8th and 2 more June 15th. These stores are the only stores in Montana that can accept eWIC until September 14th, when the whole state goes live. Overall we have had lots of success in the pilot area, currently around 165 cards have been issued.
- Important to remember that retailers will be expected to accept both eWIC cards and checks throughout an "overlap period." This is because checks are issued 3 months out, so the pilot area could see checks as late as September and everyone else could see checks as late as November.

Reminder of eWIC training resources & Updated materials:

- *eWIC Information for Retailers* webpage is now available. It includes Training memos, conference call notes, APL, UPC submission, and who to contact with questions.
- We are working to update our online cashier training video and hope to have that available by early fall.
- We are also updating our Retail Reference Manual to include the new information for eWIC and will have that available by statewide rollout.
- We are changing our Authorized Food List on September 14th to allow for new food items such as canned fruits and vegetables, string cheese, different sizes of baby foods, and other additions. Our goal is to offer more food options to WIC participants. While we still do require cashiers to be familiar with the WIC Authorized Food List and keep a copy at each checkout counter, the eWIC system will determine the eligible items, and cashiers will not have to make the decision on each one.
- Currently retailers are required to keep a copy of the Retailer Booklet at their checkout counters which describes the steps of the transaction. This is not as necessary with eWIC as many of the check-related activities are going away. We may develop a similar resource for retailers doing eWIC, but need to identify the information that

would be helpful to include in it. As mentioned above, retailers may see WIC checks until November at the latest, and we will ask that you keep these booklets at your checkout counters until then in the chance your cashiers will need them for reference if someone brings checks in.

- We are updating retailer contracts (MOU) in order to reflect the new requirements for eWIC. You should expect to see the contract amendments soon, and if you have any questions about the eWIC requirements, please contact Glade Roos.

Lessons Learned from eWIC Pilot:

- One of the main things we did for pilot was eWIC readiness certifications at each retailer. This consists of visiting each retailer and conducting a series of purchase situations for eWIC transaction, such as doing a benefit balance inquiry, trying to buy authorized and unauthorized items, verifying the correct information on the receipt. We learned that these visits are great training opportunities, and a chance to have conversations with retailers about what the new eWIC process will look like.

WIC can't train on the eWIC procedures on your Point of Sale system, which is why it was very important to do these eWIC readiness certifications with the cash register companies that install and manage them on site. They really take the lead in training store staff and troubleshoot any issues that come up.

As we develop our strategy for doing these certifications in every store statewide, we are coordinating with the POS companies to do initial connectivity testing as well as train the stores on eWIC. The whole thing works so much better when they are on-site as well.

Retailers will be hearing either from WIC or their POS managers to schedule a time to come in and do this eWIC readiness certification and eWIC training over about a 6 week period in August and up to the second week of September. We want to time these visits as close to rollout as possible because the training is more effective, but this is a challenge given the sheer number of stores to visit.

- Another thing we learned is if your store does self-checkout it may not be available to eWIC customers right away. Some retailers are working on adding this, but currently it is unavailable.
- Another thing we learned during pilot is that we need help keeping our APL updated. Some items we hear about we are not really sure if they are WIC authorized or not, and so we need to collect as much information about that item as possible so our nutritionist can make a determination. We need retailer staff to fill out the [UPC submission form](#) when a WIC item does not ring up.

Question and Answer

QUESTION – Is there a specific date when the eWIC food list will be available?

ANSWER – The new food list will become active on 9/14/2017, and we will be sending them out to stores shortly before that date.

QUESTION – Is it possible to review the UPC list for the 9/14/2017 food list to ensure they are all set up in our POS systems?

ANSWER- Please contact [Kevin](#) and we can provide one for this purpose.